

COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Westminster Police Department

Andrew E. Hall, Chief of Police

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DIGITAL CONVERTER SCAM



On February 17, 2009 people who don't already have a television with an internal digital tuner will have to buy a converter box to continue to receive a signal. Cable and satellite TV subscribers with analog TVs hooked up to their cable or satellite service should not be affected by the cutoff date. The government is providing \$40 coupons that can be used toward the purchase of converter boxes. People planning to purchase boxes with these coupons are a target for con artists.

The National Crime Prevention Council warns:

- Get coupons only from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration
- Refuse to purchase coupons from anyone else who tries to sell them to you, even at a "discount"
- Refuse to do business with any store that won't accept the coupons for eligible converter boxes but wants you to pay the "entire retail price"

In addition, since March 1, 2007, TVs and associated products (such as DVD players) must have digital tuners. While retailers have been allowed to clear out their existing stock of analog TV sets, they have had to affix a "Consumer Alert" that the TVs have only an analog broadcast tuner. Be aware of this label and what it means if you're shopping for a new TV... especially one at a bargain price! This information was provided by the National Crime Prevention Council (www.ncpc.org).



Words from Chief Hall

The New Year is upon us and the Westminster Police Department has some exciting initiatives underway that we are pleased to share with you:

1) Little Saigon Investigative Team. This special team of Westminster Police detectives and an FBI agent is located in Little Saigon, a commercial capital for Vietnamese-Americans.

Unfortunately, much of the great achievements occurring here are jeopardized by Vietnamese criminal enterprises that make huge profits from piracy, counterfeiting, trafficking and white collar crime. Our team will tackle that problem and help the "good

guys" thrive, while making Little Saigon less hospitable to criminals, disorder and blight.

2) The New Police Facility. Funded by the redevelopment agency and not general fund dollars, or new taxes, the new facility will begin to take shape this summer. It will include a modern communications center, an emergency operations center and a vastly improved detention facility. Our timing couldn't be better. The difficult economy has lowered the price of many things, including steel and other expensive components of the building.

3) 2008 in Summary. We are pleased to tell you our preliminary review of statistics shows a 2.3% drop in calls for service and a 3% drop in Part One crime. It seems

almost impossible that we continue to realize falling crime statistics given the problems in our economy and state cutbacks in supervised parole and probation. We can attribute this success, in part, to the people of Westminster and their desire to make the city a place with low crime, good schools and safe neighborhoods. Recent awards given to citizens who went "Above and Beyond" reflect their commitment.

As always, it is our honor to serve you and enjoy your partnership in the policing process. Please feel free to contact me, or any member of this department, if we can improve our performance in any way.

Community Feedback



Members of the community often take the time to let us know how the Police Department is doing. We appreciate your letters, emails, and phone calls. Hearing from you is the best way for us to ensure that we are serving your needs. As always, we strive to provide the best public safety services to each and every one in Westminster.

Submit Feedback to:
Ja'Nelle Belton, WPD Police
Services Officer – Community
Relations
Email: jbelton@westminster-
ca.gov

New Faces at WPD

Frank Proctor was born in Texas and grew up in California. He is married and has one daughter. Frank has had a great deal of customer service experience while working in the airline industry. He recently retired from Delta Airlines after 35 years of service.



Police Services Officer
Frank Proctor

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**Victoria Le** has joined the WPD family as a part time ID Technician. Although she was born in Vietnam her family moved to San Jose, California. After living in San Jose for some time, their family relocated to Arizona.

Upon graduating from high school Victoria returned to California

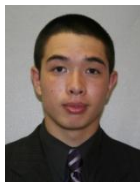
settling in Westminster and Midway City. She worked for several local doctors and hospitals as a medical assistant and a phlebotomist. She has an A.A. degree in Criminal Justice from University of Phoenix and is working on her Bachelor's degree. Victoria is happy to be here and looks forward to learning all she can in the Forensic Service Unit.



ID Technician  
Victoria Le

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Doug Lane has been hired as our newest Police Aide. Doug was born in Orange, CA and raised in the areas of Westminster and Fountain Valley. He speaks, reads and writes Vietnamese. Doug is also an Explorer with Fountain Valley PD and enjoys mixed martial arts training in his spare time. Doug graduated from Fountain Valley High School in June 2008. He currently attends Golden West College and is working on his degree in Criminal Justice. Doug's goal is to become a police officer for Westminster PD after completing his education. Doug is being assigned to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU).



Police Aide
Doug Lane

Founder's Day Festival



From October 24 through October 26, the City of Westminster held a Founder's Day Festival. The decision was made to revive this old tradition for Westminster's year long 50th anniversary celebration.

The weekend was filled with a variety of entertaining opportunities. The parade, carnival rides, live entertainment and games were huge attractions. Families from Westminster and surrounding cities came to join in this celebration. Even the Westminster Police and Fire Departments were present at the festival all weekend giving goodies to parents and children.

"An event like Founder's Day reminds us of who we were and how we started," Mayor Margie Rice said. "It teaches people about history, and we just don't do much of that anymore."

Special Recognition



On Wednesday, December 3, 2008, Detective Jim Wilson was honored by the Orange County Gang Investigators Association as the 2008 Gang Investigator of the Year. This is a prestigious award

given once a year by the association.

Detective Wilson's innovative investigative techniques while solving two recent gang shootings were cited as part of the reason for his selection of this award. In addition, Detective Wilson has arrested more than fifty gang members this past year for various charges.

Felon Convicted



On Friday, December 12, 2008, former Karate instructor Patrick Shawn Magnan, 51, was sentenced to 105 years to life in prison for molesting seven male students in his Westminster martial arts studio. Magnan had pleaded guilty on December 5, 2008, to 12 felony counts of lewd acts on a child under 14. Sentencing enhancements included lewd acts on multiple children and substantial sexual conduct with a child. Magnan operated his karate studio in Westminster from approximately 1999 to early 2006.

In May of 2008, a male victim came forward and disclosed to a school counselor that he had been molested by Magnan in 2005. The Westminister Police Department began an investigation that led to the discovery of five additional victims. All of the victims said they tried to avoid Magnan's office for fear that he would molest them. In addition, the students said they did not initially come forward out of shame and fear.

After an extensive investigation, WPD Detectives obtained an arrest warrant for Magnan and he was subsequently arrested on Saturday, August 2, 2008.

"Shop with a Cop"



Partnering with WalMart this holiday season, the Westminister Police Officers Association (WPOA) and the Fountain Valley Police Officers Association (FVPOA) hosted the annual "Shop with a Cop" program.

This program invites underprivileged children to go on a Christmas shopping trip at WalMart accompanied by an officer to help them select a gift.



"Shop with a Cop" took place on December 14, 2008, at the WalMart located at 13331 Beach Blvd. "Santa" arrived via motorcade at WalMart at 7:30AM. McDonald's graciously donated breakfast for all the participants.

The WPOA, FVPOA and WalMart also donated gift certificates for each child along with grocery gift cards to their families.

Holiday Decoration Thefts



A Westminister man was arrested for suspicion of stealing holiday decorations from approximately 16 of his neighbors.

On Monday, 12-15-2008, at approximately 11:00AM, Westminister Detectives went to the 8400 block of Heil Ave, the home of Mr. Vuong Pham, and placed him under arrest for suspicion of possessing stolen property and grand theft. WPD detectives recovered stolen holiday decorations and other landscape items including, but not limited to water fountains, trees, and Malibu lights. So far, detectives believe there are approximately 16 victims from Westminister and Huntington Beach. The victims are believed to live around the Newland Street and Heil Avenue area, which is the border between the two cities.

This investigation started when WPD Patrol Officers responded to Pham's home on December 13, 2008, in reference to a family disturbance. While inside the home, officers noticed an unusual amount of decorations inside and in the backyard. The officers recalled many theft reports in the area and alerted WPD Detectives.

Fortunately, some families were able to get their decorations back before Christmas. The Westminister Police Department urges citizens to mark their property with identifying information to assist in future investigations.

Large Scale Video Piracy Scheme Uncovered



The Westminister Police Department Special Investigations Unit ended a six month investigation into a large scale suspected video pirating scheme at Mua Hong Productions, 9531 Bolsa, Garden Grove.

On Monday, 12-22-2008, at approximately 8:00AM, Westminster Police Detectives served multiple search warrants at businesses and homes in Westminster, Santa Ana, Garden Grove and Huntington Beach in regards to a six month investigation into suspected video pirating. Detectives recovered over a half million Vietnamese CD's and DVD's, which lacked the required production labeling found on legitimate media. This requirement is a state law. Detectives loaded semitrucks full of evidence throughout the day and their efforts continued through the night. Detectives estimate the items to have a potential street value of well over a million dollars.

The owner of Mua Hong Productions, Tuyet Tran, was arrested. She was booked at the Orange County Jail on charges of California Penal Code 653w(b)(1)-Failure to disclose origin of recording, a felony.

The Special Investigations Unit will soon be housed in the Little Saigon area of Westminster. Illegitimate business practices will be just one of the many issues they will monitor. Westminster Police enjoy the existing partnership with the community and encourage legitimate businesses who want to thrive.

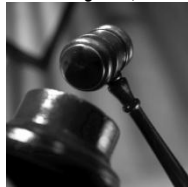
RETIREMENT

After 22 years of service with the City of Westminster, Communications Dispatcher Dawn Albert retired from the Westminster Police Department on December 27, 2008.



Dawn will be missed by friends and coworkers. Her loyalty and service to the City are very much appreciated. We all wish her the best in her retirement!

New Laws Effective January 1, 2009



Following is an abbreviated summary of the new laws that will take effect January 1, 2009, unless indicated otherwise. A more comprehensive list appears on the DMV website at www.dmv.ca.gov.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Unlicensed Car Dealers (AB 2042/Fuentes)

This new law allows law enforcement officers to impound vehicles that are being sold by unlicensed dealers.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Text Messaging (SB 28/Simitian)

This new law makes it an infraction to write, send, or read text-based communication on an electronic wireless communication device, such as a cell phone, while driving.

Fines for violating this law are at least \$76 (including penalties) for a first offense and about \$190 for subsequent offenses, depending on the county in which the violation occurred.

DUI Probation License Suspension (AB 1165 Maze)

A change in the driving under the influence (DUI) law creates a new authority for DMV to

administratively suspend the drivers license for one year under a zero tolerance standard. The new law authorizes law enforcement to issue a notice of suspension and impound the vehicle of a person who is driving with a blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.01 percent or greater while on court-ordered post-DUI probation.

OTHER

Emergency Telephone System Abuse

(AB 1976/Benoit)

Assembly Bill 1976 will strengthen the current punishments for illegal 911 calls through: creating a minimal \$50 fine for the second offense; the third offense would be a \$100 fine; the fourth and any subsequent offenses would be a \$250 fine. First offense officers must issue a written warning.

Common Fraud Schemes

*Information Courtesy of the Federal
Bureau of Investigations*

Impersonation/Identity Fraud

Impersonation fraud occurs when someone assumes your identity to perform a fraud or other criminal act. Criminals can get the information they need to assume your identity from a variety of sources, such as the theft of your wallet, your trash, or from credit or bank information. They may approach you in person, by telephone, or on the internet and ask you for the information.

The sources of information about you are so numerous that you cannot prevent the theft of your identity. But you can minimize your risk of loss by following a few simple hints.

Some Tips to Avoid Impersonation/Identity Fraud:

- Never throw away ATM receipts, credit statements, credit cards, or bank statements in a usable form.
- Never give your credit card number over the telephone unless you make the call.
- Reconcile your bank account monthly and notify your bank of discrepancies immediately.
- Keep a list of telephone numbers to call to report the loss or theft of your wallet, credit cards, etc.
- Report unauthorized financial transactions to your bank, credit card company, and the police as soon as you detect them.
- Review a copy of your credit report at least once each year. Notify the credit bureau in writing of any questionable entries and follow through until they are explained or removed.
- If your identity has been assumed, ask the credit bureau to print a statement to that effect in your credit report.
- If you know of anyone who receives mail from credit card companies or banks in the names of others, report it to local or federal law enforcement authorities.

CONSUMER ALERT

Foreclosure Rescue Scheme

From the Office of the Attorney General

If someone who is not your mortgage lender promises to save your home and asks for you to pay money up front, **WATCH OUT**. Fraudulent foreclosure consultants target homeowners who are behind

on their mortgage payments. **Here's what you can do to avoid becoming a victim:**

1. DON'T transfer title or sell your house to the foreclosure rescuer. Fraudulent foreclosure consultants often promise that if the homeowners transfer title, they may stay in the home as renters and buy it back later. The foreclosure consultants claim that transfer is necessary so that someone with a better credit rating can obtain a new loan to prevent foreclosure. BEWARE! This is a common scheme "rescuers" use to evict homeowners and steal all or most of their home's equity.

2. DON'T pay money to people who promise to work with your lender to modify your loan. It is unlawful for foreclosure consultants to collect money before (1) they give you a written contract describing the services they promise to provide and (2) they actually perform all the services described in the contract, such as negotiating new monthly payments or a new mortgage loan.

3. DON'T pay your mortgage payments to someone other than your lender, even if he/she promises to pass the payment on to the lender. Fraudulent foreclosure consultants often keep the money for themselves.

4. DON'T sign any documents without reading them first. Many homeowners think that they are signing documents for a new loan to pay off the mortgage they are behind on. Later, they discover that they actually transferred ownership to the "rescuer."

5. DON'T ignore letters from your lender. Consider contacting your lender yourself, as many lenders are willing to work with

homeowners who are behind on their payments.

6. DO contact a housing counselor approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), who may be able to help you for free. For a referral to a housing counselor near you, contact HUD at 1-800-569-4287 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or www.hud.gov.

7. DO consider contacting the Homeownership Preservation Foundation (HOPE), which assists consumers facing foreclosure, at 1-888-995-HOPE or www.995hope.org. HOPE is a non-profit organization that partners with community-based organizations, mortgage companies, and government agencies and is part of the HOPE NOW Alliance supported by the U.S. Department of Treasury and HUD.

IF YOU TRANSFERRED YOUR PROPERTY OR PAID SOMEONE TO "RESCUE" YOU FROM FORECLOSURE, YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF A CRIME. Please file a complaint with the Attorney General's Office at the following address: Office of the Attorney General - Public Inquiry Unit, P.O. Box 944255, Sacramento, CA 94244, or online at www.ag.ca.gov/consumers.